



Chair of Council

Role description

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Appointment	
Term of office	Three years, or such lesser period as the Council may in individual cases determine. The Chair of the Council may hold the office for not more than three periods of three years.
Time commitment	This is estimated to average around two full time equivalent days per month. However, the University may need to call upon the Chair at any time. The role may require daytime and evening commitments.
Remuneration	Travel and subsistence only
Appointment	By Council on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, from amongst those members of Council appointed as, or to be appointed as, a Pro-Chancellor.

Purpose of the role

The Chair is responsible for leading the Council of the University. The Council is the supreme Governing Body of the University, charged with promoting its interests and with those functions defined in the University's Royal Charter. The Chair will ensure that the Council of the University conducts its business efficiently and effectively in promoting the University's interests; that the Council exercises its powers and responsibilities judiciously; that the activities of the University are consistent with its objects as set out in the Charter; and that the Council observes the principles of public life. The Chair is responsible to the University's stakeholders for its effective leadership.

The Chair of the Council is responsible for ensuring that the Council exercises control over the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning process, and that the performance of the University is assessed adequately against the objectives that the Council has approved.

The Chair of the Council plays a key role in the governance and leadership of the University. However, he or she does not become involved in the day-to-day executive management of the University, which is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor. The Chair of the Council is responsible for maintaining a constructive working relationship with the Vice-Chancellor, providing a challenging but supportive environment in which the Vice-Chancellor and the University's senior leadership team can discharge their responsibilities for the delivery of the objectives set out in the University's Strategic Plan. The Chair of the Council is responsible, on behalf of the Council, for reviewing the performance of the Vice-Chancellor on a regular basis and for making recommendations to the Remuneration Committee. The Chair of the Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar & Secretary work closely together within the legal framework provided by the University's Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and other regulations enacted by the University from time to time and the requirements of funding and regulatory bodies.

The Chair of the Council shall also be, ex officio, a member of a number of Committees of the Council.

Key responsibilities

1. To lead the Council of the University, ensuring that it sets a successful, sustainable and clear strategic direction for the University and assesses performance adequately against the objectives that the Council has approved.
2. To chair meetings of the Council, ensuring that the business to be considered is appropriate and that the meetings are conducted efficiently and effectively, enabling all members of Council to contribute to clear decisions being taken in a manner consistent with the proper conduct of public business.
3. To ensure that Council exercises its powers and responsibilities fully and judiciously, either directly or through an effective system of sub-Committees of Council with clearly defined remits, delegated authorities and reporting obligations to Council, and through an appropriate scheme of delegation to the Vice-Chancellor.
4. To promote the long term sustainability of the Council by supporting the recruitment process and effective induction of new members and the development of existing members of the Council.
5. To take urgent decisions outside of meetings of Council on behalf of the Council in line with delegated powers, reporting back to Council on any actions taken.
6. To lead on behalf of Council in setting appropriate performance and developmental objectives for the Vice-Chancellor, reviewing performance against them on a regular basis and making recommendations to the Remuneration Committee.
7. To ensure that the Council conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life.
8. To represent the University externally, for example with the Committee of University Chairs and at events organised for Chairs of Governing Bodies by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.
9. To further the advancement of the University by contributing to the development of friends of the University, both directly and through attendance at meetings of Court.

Personal experience and attributes

1. A strong personal commitment to higher education and the values of the University of Essex.
2. Relevant professional expertise and knowledge in matters relevant to the successful operation of a large, complex and diverse organisation.
3. Experience of leading organisations and chairing meetings, bringing matters for consideration to a satisfactory conclusion.
4. Awareness of the modern regulatory environment within which publicly funded organisations operate.
5. An empathy with the interests and ambitions of the staff, students and alumni for the success of the University.

6. Sound judgement and judiciousness.
7. Networking, influencing and advocacy skills.
8. A demonstrable commitment to equality and diversity.
9. An ability to establish effective working relationships with a diverse range of people.